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Dear Friends,

Jesus said, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I too am working" (John 5:17). The Father was working when He allowed the barren time in Hannah's life that we read about in 1 Samuel 1:1-20. Her pain drew out of her the earnest prayer that God would give her a baby. And the Father was working when Sandra, the wife of a PIM employee named Peter, sat down with the story of Hannah and was deeply moved in her spirit.



Sandra and her adopted daughter Jessel traveling to Ambunti.

Although Sandra welcomed and loved their two adopted children, she had an inner longing to have a little baby. She had often felt shame during the ten years she was barren, but now faith sparked in her heart: "God can do the same thing for me as he did for Hannah in the Bible." She boldly asked everyone at her new job in the bookshop to call her "Hannah"!

By a miracle Sandra Hannah became pregnant! But when she delivered the baby in the fall of 2016, it was stillborn and Hannah herself nearly died. In the days following delivery Peter wasn't able to comfort her through the grief of losing their little one or support her during the weakness after her operation that saved her life three days later, so she packed up and went to live with her neighbor friend.

Our beloved Pastor David Wakuri (who passed away in May 2017) and his wife Marlene happened to be in Wewak during those days. They spent time individually counseling Peter and Sandra, and Sandra Hannah moved back home.

Sandra Hannah came to a place where she thanked God she could give her baby to the Father, in a different way than she had planned. She continued praying, loving her children, and growing. Sometimes Sandra Hannah and Penny would sit down one-on-one to go over a ladies' bible study together and pray. She would say, "You and Leah are the only ones who have ever done this with me, and I really love it. It helps me so much."

Other times she enjoyed going with Penny to a settlement near the town of Wewak to do Bible studies with a small group of ladies once a week. One day when they were due to go, Sandra Hannah woke up feeling miserable with a headache and bad cold, as well as being uncomfortable because she was pregnant again! She asked her husband Peter to pray for her that she would feel well enough to join Penny for the Bible study with the ladies that afternoon. By the time they had to leave for the study, Sandra Hannah felt more than up to it and praised God.

In 2017, Peter and Sandra Hannah lost their second little baby. Their prayer became, "Dear God, are you still working? We thank You through our tears. We believe that somehow You will turn this sorrow to good for those who love You."

In early 2019 Penny was asked to drive Peter and Sandra Hannah to the hospital. She was pregnant again and feeling some of the same kinds of pains that had occurred before they lost their second baby. Fear gripped her. The three of them sat in the van for a moment before starting off, and Penny asked Peter to pray for his wife. He praised God for all the goodness he had been showing them through the past years, how he had always taken care of them, and how he had always done them good. Then he put Sandra Hannah in the Lord's hands and asked him to heal her. The doctors found nothing wrong and her fears subsided.

As Peter was re-assigned from Wewak to work in Ambunti, the two of them prayed, communicated, waited on the Lord and did all they could together to plan for a safe delivery in June. Peter was taking more and more responsibility to give care and protection; Sandra Hannah was learning to trust Peter's leadership and rest in his prayers for her. Sandra Hannah's Mom came to look after the children in Ambunti while Sandra Hannah went to Vanimo to live with her sister for a while so she could be near a hospital. She and Peter stayed in touch with each other by cell phone.

A couple times in June Penny texted from Michigan to see if there was any news of a baby. Finally, on June 16 she received this text in answer, "Yes, labor finished two weeks ago and we are in Ambunti now. Love you. Thanks a lot for the prayers. Baby and I were okay and fine during labor. Thank God for all His blessings. I'm happy and Peter too was very happy. GLORY TO GOD ALMGHTY! AMEN."

Penny Schering

Perhaps you have given up hope in certain areas of your life. Perhaps what you thought was an answer to prayer became a difficult disappointment. Keep persevering, keep being obedient, and keep putting it in God's hands. He is working as you wait on Him.

Thank you for your part in Pacific Island Ministries.